

# AID TO YUCATAN.

3

On the Bill to enable the President to take temporary military possession of Yucatan,

Mr. CASS addressed the Senate as follows:

Mr. PRESIDENT: Before I proceed to the direct consideration of the subject before the Senate, I beg leave to recall a remark made by the honorable Senator from Connecticut in the discussion of yesterday, and to correct an error into which I think he has fallen. In deprecating the prompt action of Congress in this matter, the honorable Senator justified our delay by the delay of the Executive; and I thought with an appearance of harshness, if not of severity. He said the subject had been before the President for some weeks, perhaps for some months, without any decision; and he seemed to draw the conclusion, that we might now require an equal time to determine upon our legislative course. There is an essential difference, however, between the action of the Executive and of the legislative departments upon this subject. I believe it is about two months since the melancholy state of things in Yucatan was first made known to this Government, and its interposition implored. It was a new question, involving very serious considerations. We all feel this; for they are pressed upon us more and more at every step of our progress. However urgent were the claims of humanity, the necessary information for discreet action was not in the possession of the Executive. The commissioner of Yucatan had indeed made his representation; but it required to be fortified by less partial information—by the reports and opinions of our own officers, who were acting upon the coasts of that country, and who were acquainted with its present condition, and the causes that led to it. Well, sir, it took time to procure these facts through this channel, and, as soon as they were procured, the President determined upon his course, and transmitted the message now under deliberation. Certainly gentlemen do not desire the same time to discuss such a question as this, as was necessarily consumed in the collection of information. The great points of the case are before us, and the application now comes, not merely from the Yucatec commissioner, but from the legislative department of the Government in a solemn decree, and from the Executive of the country. It is a case of overwhelming, overpowering, necessity. While we are deliberating, the sad action is going on; and however prompt we may now be, we may not be prompt enough for the circumstances. The fate of the country may be decided before we can send any relief. At any rate, let us redeem ourselves from the reproach of indifference or unneces-

sary delay. This is one of those great cases for human action, where to do well is to do promptly, and where too much caution will show that we are unequal to the position in which we find ourselves placed.

I need not recall the condition of Yucatan. The message itself, with the accompanying documents, the information which daily reaches us through the public journals, and the discussion here, have put us in possession of the true state of things in that unhappy country. It is divided between the two races of Spanish and of aboriginal descent, and the Indians have obtained the superiority—have descended from the high country upon the low, and are driving the white race before them to death or to the ocean. It is a war, if that can be called a war, where the fighting seems to be all upon one side, of destruction and extermination. Not figuratively, because here and there a man is killed or a plantation laid waste, but literally, rigidly; for nothing is spared, neither man nor his works, and fire and the sword accompany the Indian army, and do their work without pity as without remorse. Aid, under such circumstances, is a duty of humanity, which no one in this country calls in question. But, owing to the peculiar features of our own Constitution, many doubt whether this Government has the power to grant it. Though I believe, sir, we may clearly interpose in such an extreme case of national suffering, as was done many years since for Caracas; yet, as this question does not lie in my way, I shall not turn aside to seek it. All may hold the claims of humanity to be a strong inducement for action, when conjoined with other motives for legislative interposition, which render our action equally constitutional and expedient. This question intimately connects itself with the prosperity and (I had almost said) the safety of our country. We have reached one of those epochs in the progress of nations to which the historian looks back with interest, and whence he traces much of the good or evil they encounter in their career—one of those epochs which impress themselves upon the character of a country, and when vigorous counsels are equally dictated by justice and by wisdom, while timid and irresolute measures are sure to be followed by political weakness and by the contempt of the world.

The principle advanced by Mr. Monroe, many years since, in two of his messages to Congress, which denounced any future attempt of the European Powers to establish new colonies in this country, has been brought into this discussion, and, in fact, necessarily connects itself with it. This principle has been reasserted by the present Exec-

utive, upon the same general considerations which influenced the action of his predecessor. It was a wise measure, fully justified by received principles of the law of nations and by the actual circumstances of our country. The honorable Senator from Connecticut [Mr. NILES] considers the reiteration of the principle by the present Executive, and perhaps its original annunciation by Mr. Monroe, as the claim of a right to regulate all the affairs of this continent, so far as respects Europeans. But this, sir, is an entire misconception of the whole subject. It has, however, prevailed somewhat extensively, both here and elsewhere, though it seems to me that the slightest consideration of the messages referred to would have corrected, or rather prevented, this flagrant error. Neither of these Presidents, the past nor the present, assumed to interfere with any existing rights of other nations upon this continent. Neither of them called in question their right to hold and improve the colonies they possessed, at their own pleasure. Such an assumption would have been equally obtrusive and ineffectual; and how the opinion could have prevailed that has been advanced, no one can tell; for, in the documents themselves, the true doctrine is cautiously guarded, and existing rights considered as unassailable. The object which these statesmen had in view was to prevent the recolonization of any portion of this hemisphere; to announce to the world, that when any of the colonies planted upon it escaped from European thralldom, they should not be again subjected to that comparatively humiliating condition. The Spanish colonies had shaken off the yoke of Spain, and had asserted their independence. The struggle had been going on some time, and it was apparent to all the world, except to the world of Spanish obstinacy, that, if not prevented by external force, it would terminate, as it has terminated, in their admission into the great family of nations. It was obvious that European complications might arise, in consequence of the necessities of Spain, and of her recklessness in pushing the contest, which might affect the fate of these countries. French or English assistance might be asked for, and rights conveyed which would induce these Powers to take part in the struggle, with a view to take part in the spoils that might result from it. This was the evil foreseen, and the declaration of this country was one of the remedies to avert it. On this, as upon many other occasions, we halted in our course, and did not come up to our own work. Such declarations as those referred to, when made by the head of a European nation, are made authoritatively, because he who pronounces them has the power to enforce them. They become settled maxims of policy, and other nations are aware that they cannot be interfered with, except at the hazard of war. But it is far different here. Great principles of conduct depend essentially upon public sentiment, and can only be enforced by the action of Congress. Public sentiment in this country has, I believe, with unusual unanimity, approved this principle; but Congress has never, by action or declaration, given it the sanction of its authority. It has rested, therefore, barren among our archives, only to bear fruit when the legislature of the country adopts it as its own. My honorable friend from Ohio, [Mr. ALLEN,] with that sagacity and energy which mark his political course, seeing this

state of things, and foreseeing its consequences, endeavored some two years since to draw the attention of Congress to this subject, and to procure its authoritative action. But he failed—not, however, from the want of those exertions which ought to have insured success; and we have come down to the present day with this great principle—recommended, indeed, but not asserted, by the only body which has the power to give effect to the assertion.

Mr. President, a few brief reflections will, I think, satisfy us that this measure is as just as it is important; and now, when we must discard or embrace it, it is our duty to examine the considerations which are connected with it. That law which regulates the intercommunication of nations, is not rigid and stationary. It rests, indeed, upon certain fundamental principles of right and wrong; but many of its principles change with the changes of nations, and accommodate themselves to the progress of society and to the existing opinions of mankind. Illustrations of this principle are familiar to every reader of modern history. They are to be found in the questions which have been agitated about the Baltic; the Black sea; the right of England, claimed and exercised at one time, to control the navigation of what she called her narrow seas; about the equally absurd claim of Spain, which she actually enforced for many years, to prevent the vessels of other nations from sailing within the neighborhood of her American colonies; and about the right of the Pope to partition the new continent among the Powers of the old. I have not had time to advert to the historical authorities, but I am strongly impressed with the conviction, that when the Portuguese Government had been transferred to Brazil, and the permanent condition of the two countries became the subject of consideration in Europe, it was contended, and, I believe, admitted, that the two nations must be eventually separated, if the government remained in Brazil, as the principle could not be admitted that European nations might become the colonial establishments of the American Powers. This was assumed as a kind of family law belonging to the nations of that hemisphere, necessarily arising out of their condition.

When this continent was first settled, its true destiny seems never to have occurred even to the most sagacious statesman. The colonial establishments were formed and settled for the purpose of commerce and profit, and were held only for the benefit of the metropolitan governments. The memory of this condition of things survives in the word *plantations*, yet retained as the name of one of our States, and indicating the object of its early establishment; and, in the term *general court*, the appellation of the legislature of several members of the Confederacy, identical with the name of the directing power of large corporations in England—such as the East India Company and the Hudson's Bay Company—and which belonged to the corporations whose powers were transferred to New England, but without the slightest apparent conception of the true consequences that were to follow. This *utilitarian* principle is manifest in the whole course of English legislation, and of Executive administration, respecting these States, then colonies of that country. Why, sir, it has been said—rather I suppose in illustration and reproach,

than as a literal fact, but still true enough to a great extent—that even a horse-shoe nail could not, by law, be made in America, but must be manufactured in England. Every war in Europe was a war upon this continent. Governments, comparatively imbecile, like those of Spain and Portugal, and in the last stages of political decrepitude, owned and controlled half the world. Magnificent regions, destined by God to be inhabited by millions of human beings, penetrated by great arteries, divided by lofty mountains, where were emboweled the riches of the earth—prairies and pampas, and forests, as boundless in extent as they might be rendered fertile in their productions—all these gifts of nature to man were locked up, rendered useless by the wretched policy or the little miserable intrigues of the courts of Madrid and of Lisbon.

Such was the condition of this continent, when we came upon the scene of political action as one of the independent Powers of the world. New interests then arose, and a new party to assert and protect them. With the change in our situation, came changes in our rights and duties. It was obvious that *many old things must pass away*. The first link in the chain of servile connection between Europe and America was broken. When the whole connection should be dissolved, became thenceforth only a question of time. For a while, however, we had too much to do with the present, to take any accurate survey of the future. Emerging from a terrible war, our first object was to repair its ravages, and recover from its material effects. We had then to consolidate our Government, and to accommodate our institutions, State and general, to the new circumstances of our position; and while we were doing this, that tremendous storm arose in Europe, which swept over the Old World, and, during its progress, involved all the nations of the earth, directly or indirectly, either in its operation or its effects. Until this passed away, the Government of the United States had no opportunity to investigate and assert the new principles arising out of their independence and their connection with the other communities of the American continent. But the revolution of the Spanish colonies gave them this opportunity; and their increased power gave to the Executive—if it did not give to Congress—the confidence necessary for decisive action. There was an American interest upon this hemisphere, separate from the European interest. The Powers inhabiting it, besides their more general relation with the nations of the earth, had a policy more peculiarly their own. The questions leading to war in Europe were almost as endless as many of them were futile. They were wars of succession, of interest, of aggrandizement, of resentment, and of almost every other passion which sways the human breast. Minions and favorites and mistresses acted upon imbecile sovereigns and corrupt cabinets, and the peace of the world was sacrificed to the most despicable motives. It would really appear in some of the wars of modern times as though power were sometimes placed in unworthy hands, to show how far human forbearance can be carried, and the dignity of human nature degraded. We desired to live out of the sphere of such operations, and we could not do so if they were brought into close contact with us. Political propagandism has no place in our policy. We prefer our own form of

government, from a conviction that it is best calculated to promote our happiness; and we rejoice when other nations are willing and prepared to adopt it, from an equal conviction that it will promote theirs. But with a determination to judge for ourselves, we leave to them the same right. Certainly it is interesting to us that the States of this continent should be republican as well as independent. We can assimilate more readily with them, and we believe their condition will be safer and more permanent. But whatever form of government they might choose to adopt, it was for their interest and ours that they should advance in all the elements of improvement, moral and material; that their powers should be developed, and their own industry opened to the world, and that of the world to them. Connected with the uncertain and ever-changing fate of European sovereigns, their condition would not only be precarious, continually exposed to war, but the sources of their prosperity would be locked up, as the miser locks up his treasures, which he will neither use himself nor suffer to be used by others. The honorable Senator from Connecticut has put to us the *argumentum ad hominem*, and has said that we are inconsistent in our principles, because we do not interfere with France and England in their operations in the La Plata. Certainly the war which has been waging there is one of the most unjust in modern times; but still it is an open, public-avowed war—not, it is said, for the purposes of aggrandizement, but with the professed view to terminate the hostilities which had long been going on between the independent States on that river. The honorable gentleman, as I before said, has misconceived the nature of the principle. We do not deny the right of the Powers of Europe to go to war with the American States, when they have cause to do so; and of this they must judge for themselves. When these wars, however, are undertaken for the purpose of recolonizing any portion of this continent, or when that consequence is obviously to flow from them, then will come the time to test the true principles of our action.

Beside these considerations, arising out of the material and intellectual progress of the American States, there was another more immediately affecting us, and which we could not neglect. One of these States, and the most important among them, was coterminous with us along the whole extent of our southern frontier. Any convulsion, internal or external, affecting her, could not fail to engage our attention, as it could not fail to affect our interest. Continually attached to a European sovereignty, she would be continually exposed to the vicissitudes which such a state of things must necessarily bring with it; and war upon the ocean and the land would expose our borders to ever-renewing dangers. And she, too, is intimately connected by position and character with the States south of her, and their dangers would be hers.

But it is objected, that this principle is at war with the salutary rule of non-intervention laid down by Mr. Jefferson, and now regarded as one of the received maxims of our policy. Sir, this is not so. These declarations on the subject of European recolonization are not for the purpose of interfering with other Powers, but to prevent other Powers from interfering with us. No man will carry this doctrine of non-intervention so far as to say that

it prohibits us from preventing the action, united or single, of other nations, who seek the adoption of measures affecting our interest and safety. If a league were forming among the great Powers of Europe, which, under whatever pretence, was seeking the establishment of a principle which would give to England the control of the commerce of the world, must we sit still and calmly await its consummation, because, if we do not, we shall interfere in the affairs of other nations? and then, when the time of trial comes, be compelled to resist by arms, when a firm interposition and declaration of our resolution during the progress of the diplomatic measures might have thwarted the objects of ambition, disguised under the pretence of philanthropy? Thus to interfere is no improper intervention, but a high dictate of duty, demanded by the true principles of public safety.

We desire no union of the American States; no league to involve us in their difficulties, or they in ours; no Panama mission to open a grand negotiation, and to open likewise a career of complicated diplomatic relations, as difficult to define in their principles as to control in their practical operations. We desire the most perfect independence for all of them, and the most amicable relations among themselves and with us. But we are determined, so far as depends on us, that no European family principles shall come to find an abiding place upon this continent, and to involve in wars, that do not interest them, the various States which occupy it.

And, thanks to this "wretched," and "miserable," and "unjust," and "rash and precipitate war," our voice will now be heard and heeded through the world. Yes, sir, that war, thus characterized, has shed a flood of glory upon this country which will irradiate its history for generations yet to come. Its cost! its cost! is daily dinned into our ears, as though there were nothing to be regarded but money in the conduct and character of nations. It has cost much money—I do not deny it; though I believe it has been prosecuted with as much economy as is practicable in such distant and extensive operations. I regret the cost, as I regret the necessity of the war which led to it. But should we never get one foot of territory from Mexico as an indemnity—and appearances seem now to indicate that insatuated councils may prevail in that unhappy country, and that we may be compelled to hold on to the whole—but if we should never get one foot, as an American citizen, loving my country, and having cause to love her, I would not sell my share of the glory we have acquired for many times my share of the expense it has cost. It is not mere glory which this war has brought us, though that is one of the essential elements of national power; but it is character, and distinction, and position, and beyond these strength and safety. Our territory is henceforth holy ground. No hostile foot will pollute it. No foreign power will attack us. No other war, I verily believe, will be necessary for long years to come. Paradoxical as it may appear, we shall have fought ourselves out of war. We were comparatively unknown. Our flag, indeed, was everywhere the emblem and the evidence of our commercial activity and enterprise. But our power to defend it was little understood—I might rather say utterly disregarded. But the great experiment has been made, and we take our acknowledged rank among the

powerful nations of the earth. The decree has gone forth, and he who runs may read it. The entire political separation of this continent from Europe is not a question of fact, but of time. That event must come, and appearances augur that it will come speedily. We may well leave it to its own fullness of time without any improper interference on our part.

But we are now called upon to make a practical application of the great principle I have been considering. The condition of Yucatan, and the considerations connected with it, bring this subject directly before us. We can enforce the doctrine; but we cannot enforce it without discharging the duties which it brings with it. And if we do not enforce it, we shall expose ourselves to eternal self-reproach and to the contumely of the world.

I have already briefly alluded to the condition of Yucatan. Its civilized population is placed, not between the ocean and the frowning battlements which drive it back, and where no human being can live, but between the ocean and ruthless barbarians, possessing as little mercy as the sea into which they are driving their wretched victims. It is one of those great cases in human affairs which override all other considerations. Yucatan has a right to go where she can, with her sovereignty in her hand, and demand protection from the Powers of the earth, and offer her own allegiance in return for it. She has gone to England and to Spain, and she has come to us. She prefers our action to theirs; but if she cannot get the one, she must accept the other. As to Spain, any effective aid or any design of aggrandizement is probably equally out of the question, and we have England alone to look to in the solution of the question presented to us. If we do not act, will she render the assistance demanded, and accept the consideration which may accompany it? That she may do so, without giving us any just cause of offence whatever, and thus accomplish her mission without being involved in any controversy with us, is too clear to be called in question. Interest, therefore, and humanity, as well as the principles which from all time have regulated her political conduct, prompt her to accede to the demands of the Government of Yucatan. The distinguished Senator from South Carolina [Mr. CALHOUN] thinks she will not; but, whether he comes to this conclusion from the facts in her past history or from the circumstances of her present position, it seems to me it is erroneous and unsafe.

I shall not enter into any review of the system of English acquisition. I shall briefly allude to the subject, not in the spirit of censure—though, indeed, there is too often reason enough for that feeling—but merely to recall the principles of her policy, and to judge what she will do by what she has done. The distinguished Senator from Kentucky [Mr. CRITTENDEN] asks, and with some emphasis, *what England wants of such a barren country as Yucatan?* I ask him, in return, what she wants of such barren rocks as Gibraltar, and St. Helena, and Aden, and all the other barren rocks, and islets, and positions, which she has seized and now occupies through the world? Why, sir, they are towers—some of them watch-towers, and others towers of safety—upon that wall of circumvallation, thus beautifully designated the other day by the honorable Senator from Missis-

siippi, [Mr. Davis,] with which she has surrounded the world.

Mr. CRITTENDEN. Will the honorable Senator allow me to make an inquiry?

Mr. CASS. Certainly.

Mr. CRITTENDEN. Will the Senator be pleased to tell me—for I am uninformed and ignorant upon this point—how near a man-of-war or seventy-four gun ship can approach the promontory of Yucatan?

Mr. CASS. I intended to advert to the subject connected with the inquiry of the honorable Senator in another part of my remarks; but I will now anticipate it. The application of steam power to armed vessels has introduced an improvement which may occasion an entire change in naval warfare. It is difficult to foresee its consequences, of the effect it may hereafter produce. One thing, however, is certain, that armed steam vessels, of a size and draught suitable to the navigation they are designed to encounter, will take a decisive part in naval operations. Depôts for fuel become, therefore, of paramount necessity for commercial nations. Without them, their steam navigation will be circumscribed and inefficient. With them, to furnish the supplies required to vessels as they call for them, the world may be circumnavigated, and steam power everywhere used. Now, sir, we have no places of deposit anywhere but at home, and England has them everywhere. She has selected her positions for that purpose with that foresight which marks her character; and she will keep them at all times supplied with abundance of necessary fuel. The advantages she will derive from this system of policy are sufficiently obvious; and we must depend upon our energy to meet them as we best can when the proper time comes. Now, sir, if England possesses the promontory of Yucatan and the island of Cuba, she will build steam vessels suitable to the harbors which may be found there: vessels of a light draught of water, but carrying a few heavy guns, and capable of commanding the outlet of the Gulf—floating batteries, in fact, almost equal in efficiency to permanent batteries, ready to be stationed in the narrow channel, and completely to command it.

Mr. CRITTENDEN. The honorable gentleman has not answered my question. Again I would inquire whether there is any port in Yucatan into which a seventy-four can enter?

Mr. CASS. I am aware, sir, that the water in the neighborhood of Yucatan is shallow, and there are places where large vessels cannot approach within some miles of the land. But I repeat, that this consideration becomes comparatively unimportant when we look to the nature of the vessels which will be employed, and upon the protection they will find even upon a shallow coast.

Mr. CRITTENDEN. Again I ask the honorable Senator, how near a seventy-four gun ship can approach the promontory of Yucatan?

Mr. CASS. Mr. President, I cannot give a direct and professional answer to the question of the honorable Senator. Our maps of Yucatan are imperfect; and how near ships-of-the-line can approach its coast, I do not know. But I beg the Senator to recollect that no Government in its senses, possessing the point of Yucatan and the opposite point of Cuba, would employ heavy ships-of-the-line permanently to command the channel

between them. It would employ steam vessels of light draught, but of great power, which might find protection in the various inlets to be found there. In looking at the eastern point of the promontory of Yucatan, it will be seen that the island of Cosamel stretches along it for some miles, with a considerable channel between the island and the main, which has probably a depth of water for vessels of a medium burden, and which would afford them adequate protection.

[Since this colloquy, an official copy of a recent British survey of the coast of the promontory has been received at the office of the Coast Survey, in this city, and Lieutenant Porter has been good enough to furnish me with the following memoranda from it, which answer the inquiries of the Senator from Kentucky, and place in a stronger light than I had even anticipated, the value of the points of Yucatan and Cuba:

"There is a fine harbor for any size vessels under the island of Muheres, the easternmost point of Yucatan; and it is protected from the winds in every direction."

"Both the harbors of Ascension and Spiritu bay are good; the latter capable of holding a large fleet of the heaviest kind of English frigates and war-ships. These positions may be made to command the outlet of the Gulf."

"There is good anchorage off the northeast point of the island of Cosamel; this island appears on incorrect charts as 'False Cape,' but there is no such place."

"Spiritu bay would contain a hundred steamers of the largest class, and any number of the smaller class."

"There is also fine anchorage at the northwest point of the island of Cuba for any size vessel—6½ to 7 fathoms."

The territorial acquisitions which England has made through the world, have been selected with great sagacity; some for the purposes of power and commerce, and others as positions where her vessels can find protection and be refitted, and where supplies for their necessities can always be found. She holds the southern points of four continents, and entire possession of the fifth. The whole commerce of the world passes before her gates. The Falkland Islands, near Cape Horn, give her the command of the passage round our hemisphere. The Cape of Good Hope gives her an equal control of the navigation of Southern Africa. Aden is the key to the Red Sea. The southern points of Asia, Cape Comorin, on the east side of the bay of Bengal, and the Malacca canal, on the west, are commanded; the former by Ceylon, and the latter by Singapore; and to these she has recently added a part of Borneo and Labuan, in the Indian Archipelago. New Holland, in the great Southern Pacific Ocean, is one of her colonial dependencies, and its harbors are essential to the navigation of that region. Hong-Kong is her foothold upon the Chinese empire, equally available for the purposes of commerce now, and of ambition hereafter. The rock of Gibraltar, which frowns over the entrance into the Mediterranean, is at the southern extremity of Europe, and has been held by her for a century and a half, to control its commerce, and is among the last positions from which she will retreat.

So much for the policy of England as deduced from her conduct. If the distinguished Senator from South Carolina draws his conclusion that she will not interfere in the concerns of Yucatan from the circumstances of her present position, I think his views are quite as unsafe as if it were drawn from her established system of action. Certainly there is much in her existing condition to excite her own solicitude, and the attention of the

world. The honorable Senator from Connecticut thinks she has reached, as he says, her culminating point. Perhaps she has; but I shall not venture to speak dogmatically upon that question. I leave to a rasher or to a wiser man than I am, to pronounce what is to be her future fate. I sincerely hope that the political convulsions which seem now to be shaking the frame of the English Government, if not of English society, may pass away, leaving the principles of freedom and equality perfectly established, and those exclusive privileges which elevate the hundreds and press down the millions forever abolished. To free England from many of the arbitrary tendencies which prevail there, would be to do more for human liberty than almost any other political measure now to be attained. She is yet the stronghold of many principles at war with human happiness; and if she surrendered to the advancing spirit of the age, the example would exert a most salutary effect upon the other nations of Europe. But however this may be, sir, England is not to be annihilated, nor her spirit, nor intelligence, nor energy destroyed. She will have a government, be it monarchical or republican; and she is not going suddenly to change the identity of her character—an identity which belongs as much to nations as to individuals—to relinquish all her projects of aggrandizement, and to abandon, without effort, the high position she holds in the world. Why, sir, republics are as jealous of their rights, and as firm in their determination to defend them, as the proudest monarchies. Every schoolboy can tell us of the bright days of Greece and Rome, when power was exercised by all, and when all were equally interested in the glory and prosperity of their common country. And we see the prevalence of the same spirit in modern times, when Venice, and Genoa, and Holland, almost governed in succession the commerce of the world, and when the French Republic marched over Europe, prostrating the ensigns of royalty in its victorious career. The nations of the old hemisphere will come out of their internal struggles fitted, I trust, to enjoy free institutions, and prepared to maintain them, and determined to be rivals henceforth—not in war, but in intelligence, in industry, and in productiveness.

In recalling the history of English territorial acquisition, I do not recollect one in the long list—except, perhaps, Scotland, which was joined to her, or rather which she joined by succession—which was not made by the sword. And is it probable she would reject one, if peacefully and voluntarily offered to her? When did she put aside, even with the affectation of coyness, the crown of territorial aggrandizement? When did she say *Nolo episcopatu*, with the mitre within her reach? And think you, sir, that she will commence her career of moderation, when the functions of conqueror and protector can be united without guilt and without reproach—when she can gratify at once her ambition and her philanthropy—and when the same act will elevate her character and extend her dominion? To believe all this, is to reject the lessons of experience and the motives of human conduct, whether personal or national. History, we are told, is philosophy teaching by example. If the examples of aggrandizement in the history of England, furnished by her conduct under ever-varying circumstances, and too

often with an utter disregard of the dictates of justice and the opinion of the world, do not teach us the philosophy of her past action, and the probability of her future, we may as well close the records of human experience, and abandon events to the doctrine of chances, seeking neither to control nor direct them. I think, sir, we might have safely arrived at the conclusion, even prior to this debate, that Yucatan would not apply to England for assistance in vain, unless there were controlling circumstances to forbid her interference. But, as if to rebuke us for any doubt upon the subject, since this discussion commenced, it has been ascertained that at least four companies of British troops have marched into the Yucatan territory from Balize. This is the act of the colonial authority; and the movement itself is not sufficient to excite any apprehensions as to ulterior designs. But it is one of the signs of the times, and shows pretty clearly that the colonial government expected support at home. What the several West India governments may do, is not known. If they follow the same course, a formidable force may be collected in Yucatan. Now, I do not undertake to say what the English Government will do under existing circumstances. Much may depend upon considerations, both external and internal, not to be appreciated here. The honorable Senator from Connecticut asks if we could complain, should England grant the assistance which we refuse? Certainly not, sir; and it is this very view of the matter which excites my solicitude. I have no belief that England, at this moment, when the waters around her are all troubled, would take possession of Yucatan by force. But, invited there by the Yucatec people, under a pressing emergency, she has a right to go there—and to remain there, too, if she will—as a proper consideration for her services.

I now come, Mr. President, to other, and perhaps graver considerations, directly or indirectly involved in this question. The Gulf of Mexico is the reservoir of the great river of the North American continent, whose importance it is as difficult to realize, as it is the value of the country which must seek an outlet to the ocean through its waters. That country is nearly equal to all Europe in extent, embracing twenty-five degrees of latitude and thirty-five of longitude upon the great circles of the globe. This vast basin extends from the summit of the Alleghany to the summit of the Rocky Mountains, and its population now equals eight millions. The man yet lives who was living when almost the first tree fell before the woodman's stroke in this great domain, and the man is now living who will live to see it contain one hundred millions of people. Already the hardy western pioneer has crossed the barrier of the Rocky Mountains, and the forest is giving way before human industry upon the very shores that look out upon China and Japan. The Mississippi is the great artery of this region; which, drawing its supplies from the fountains of the north, pours them into the ocean under a tropical sun, and drains, in its own course, and in the course of its mighty tributaries—tributaries in name, but equals and rivals in fact—the most magnificent empire which God, in his providence, has ever given to man to reclaim and enjoy. I have myself descended that great stream two thousand miles in a birch canoe, admi-

ring the country through which it passes in a state of nature, and lost in the contemplation of what that country is to be when subdued by human industry. The statistics of such a region in years to come is a subject too vast for calculation. Its extent, fertility, salubrity, means of internal navigation, and the character of the people who will inhabit it, baffle all efforts to estimate its productiveness, the tribute which its industry will pay to the wants of the world, and the supplies which the comfort and habits of its people may require.

During the palmy days of Napoleon, it is said, that one of his projects was to convert the Mediterranean into a French lake. England has nearly done what defied the power and ambition of the great conqueror. She has almost converted it into an English lake in time of war. Gibraltar commands its entrance, Malta the channel between Sicily and Africa, and the Ionian Islands the waters of the Levant. There were good reasons for believing, a short time since, that England was seeking to obtain a cession of the island of Crete, the ancient kingdom of Minos, which would give her the port of Canea, that I found one of the most magnificent harbors in the world, equally capacious and secure. If England, in the pursuit of the same system, should acquire similar commanding positions on the Gulf of Mexico, that great reservoir would become a *mare clausum*, and no keel would plough it, nor canvass whiten it in time of war, but by her permission. Now, sir, looking to the extent of our coast in that direction—to the productions which must pass there to seek a market—to the nature of our population—and to the effect upon all these, which a permanent naval superiority would produce—where is the American who is not prepared to adopt any measures to avert such a calamitous state of things? Who can fail to see the nature of the predatory warfare which England would carry on, in all times of hostilities, from her various positions, which would encircle the Gulf, from the Bahamas to Cuba and to Yucatan? and who also can fail to see that even in time of peace, her many harbors would become places of refuge for a certain class of our population, and that perpetual collisions would occur, involving the peace of the two countries?

The Gulf of Mexico, sir, must be practically an American lake for the great purpose of security—not to exclude other nations from its enjoyment, but to prevent any dominant Power, with foreign or remote interests, from controlling its navigation. It becomes us to look our difficulties in the face. Nothing is gained by blinking a great question. Prudent statesmen should survey it; and, as far as may be, provide for it. We have, indeed, no Mount Carmel, like that of Judea, nor prophet to ascend it and to warn us against a coming storm. But the home of every citizen is a Mount Carmel for us, whence he can survey the approaching cloud, even when no bigger than a man's hand, which threatens to overspread the political atmosphere, and to burst in danger upon his country. It should be a cardinal principle in our policy, never to be lost sight of; that the command of the Gulf of Mexico must never pass into foreign hands. Its great geographical features indicate at once our safety and our danger. From the southern point of Florida to Yucatan, the chord of the arc does not probably exceed two hundred and fifty miles—

a shorter distance than that from Yucatan to Vera Cruz. From the southern point of Florida to Cuba, it is not more than forty miles; and from the western extremity of Cuba to the peninsula of Yucatan, it is not more than sixty miles. These two outlets—the latter into the Caribbean sea, and the former into the Atlantic Ocean—do not, therefore, exceed one hundred miles in their united width, and together make the exit and entrance of the Gulf. Opposite the mouth of the Mississippi, is the noble harbor of Havana, almost within sight of which the whole commerce of the Gulf passes. England has already got the Bahama Islands, with the port of Nassau, and other positions. So long as Cuba and Yucatan are held by their present possessors, neither we nor the commercial world have anything to fear from English projects, whatever they may be. But let their dominion be transferred to England, and where are we? The mouth of our great river might at any time be hermetically sealed, and the most disastrous injuries inflicted upon us. One important step in the command of the outlet of the Gulf of Mexico she has already taken by the possession of the Bahamas. If she gets peaceable possession of Yucatan, by our remissness, she will have taken the second. Cuba may be the last. I will ask the distinguished Senator from South Carolina if he would advocate the interference of this country by force, if England were attempting by force to take possession of Yucatan? And if he would—as I believe he would—how can he consent to permit her to do peacefully what we may peacefully prevent? I have already, sir, alluded to the effects which steam navigation is to produce upon the commercial and military marine of the world; and the various harbors and inlets of these possessions would be rendezvous whence armed steam-vessels would issue to prey upon our commerce, to close the great channels of communication, or to carry on marauding expeditions against our coast. England has recently extended her possessions south of Belize by the acquisition of Indian territory. The honorable Senator from New York [Mr. Dix] brought this subject before us some time since, and exposed the details of her tortuous policy. The Mosquito king, as he is called—the chief of a tribe of Indians occupying a portion of the coast—some how or other passed under English pupilage. It is said that he made the Queen his residuary legatee, and thus the country and its inhabitants have gone to increase the dominion of England. A cheap mode, this, of acquisition—much more economical than Indian councils, Indian presents, and Indian annuities.

Mr. President, many of the great principles of national action depend on existing circumstances. There are few mere questions of abstract right in the intercourse of nations. Peaceable acquisitions of territory, or acquisitions in a just war, can give no offence unless to nations whose safety they endanger. Where this is the case, they may be protested against, or resisted, if necessary. It is a question which each nation must judge for itself, and upon its own responsibility, but one which it ought to judge fairly. Much of the public law of the world is founded upon this principle of safety, and the elementary works abound with its illustrations. Traces of it are to be found in all the questions about the balance of power in Europe; in the

disputes concerning Malta, and Algiers, and Belgium, and many other subjects which have engaged the attention of Governments and formed the labors of diplomatists. Its perversion has, no doubt, led to abuses, as has the perversion of many other principles; but its foundation rests in the nature of things. Self-defence is as incident to communities as to individuals, and a provident forecast requires us to watch any dangerous projects of domination, and to provide for them as we can. I repeat, that a nation under these circumstances must judge for itself. Proximity of situation, the nature of the intercourse resulting from it, commanding positions to do injury, and other considerations, are all elements to be taken into view. In my opinion, we owe it to ourselves to avow distinctly to the world, that the attempt to procure the transfer of Cuba from Spain to any other nation, whether peaceably or forcibly, would be resisted by the whole power of this country. To others, it may be a question of territorial aggrandizement, or of mercantile cupidity; but to us, it is a question of necessity, I had almost said, of political life or death. It would become the gate to close the great river of our country. The waters of that river, thereafter as heretofore, would reach the Gulf, but its commerce would never reach the ocean. The distinguished Senator from Kentucky says, that while we reproach the ambition of England, we go on acquiring, and asks where we shall stop. I do not know where we shall stop. That decree is probably not yet written. But we seek no acquisition which can injure England, and we desire, in turn, that she should seek none which will injure us.

The principles involved in this system of policy have already been asserted and acted upon by the United States. They will be found in the proceedings respecting Florida, in the acts of Congress of 15th January, 1811, of March 3, 1811, and of February 3, 1813. It was then declared that *the influence which the destiny of territory adjoining the United States may have upon their security, tranquillity, and commerce, is a just motive for interference*; "and that the United States cannot see any part of the territory pass into the hands of any foreign Power; and that a due regard to their own safety compels them to provide, under certain contingencies, for the temporary occupation of the said country."

I understand from one of our associates in this body, who is not likely to be deceived, that either in the biography of Mr. Jefferson, or in his correspondence, similar views are expressed by him respecting the condition and importance of Cuba, and the interest which the United States have in its ultimate fate. I have not had time to ascertain the fact by reference to the works referred to. If it is so, it is but one proof the more of the sagacity of that great patriot and statesman, and of the decision of character which marked his course through life. I have run my eye, however, over his correspondence on the subject of Florida, and I find the true doctrine enunciated and defended there, as distinctly as it is asserted in the acts of Congress I have quoted, and which received the sanction of his friend and successor, Mr. Madison.

I trust that the intrigues of no nation will ever compel us to take forcible possession of Cuba. But it seems to me that the more the subject is examined, both here and in Spain, the more obvious

it will be, that it is in the interest of both countries that the island should be ceded to us for a reasonable consideration. But the details of such a question are better fitted for diplomatic arrangement than for legislative discussion. I shall, therefore, not enter into them here, contenting myself with expressing the hope that the whole subject will not fail to engage the attention of every existing administration till a successful result is obtained. Such negotiations are delayed or hastened by the condition of things in Europe, and by events, which, though they cannot be foreseen, yet exert a decisive influence when they occur. And our Executive should be ready to give to these a proper direction.

Unfortunately for the stability of the Spanish monarchy, for almost a century and a half—since the death, indeed, of the last king of the house of Austria—Spain has been convulsed by questions of succession and by family difficulties, which have exhausted her power and almost ruined her prosperity. The vast empire acquired by the romantic but barbarous exploits of Cortez and Pizarro and Almagro, has fallen to pieces, and but a fragment of it remains—a sad memorial, as it were, of departed greatness. The jewels in her crown have been reft from it, and it has lost all its splendor. Looking at the present condition of Spain, there is no reason to hope that the difficulties immediately before her, are less grave than those she has passed through. Internal tranquillity seems yet far off, and external circumstances are equally unfavorable. The disposition of the few colonial dependencies she yet retains will come up for discussion every time she is involved in a domestic or a foreign war. The fate of the island of Cuba will be thus uncertain, to its own injury and to our danger.

Doubts have been expressed here as to the designs of England upon Cuba. Well, sir, we have no direct evidence upon that subject, nor can we expect to have it. England is wary in her negotiations; and they have often become known but by their consummation. But rumors—those precursors of coming diplomatic events—have prevailed for many years that she entertained this design, and they have been firmly believed both in Europe and in this country. It has been repeatedly said that she had demanded the island, either in absolute conveyance, or as a mortgage for the payment of the debts due to her people; and also to satisfy the claims she herself had for expenditures made on account of Spain in her great struggle with Napoleon. These rumors have been credited by our own Government; and, in 1840, during Mr. Van Buren's administration, Mr. Forsyth, who then presided over the Department of State, so honorably for himself, and so usefully for his country, called the whole subject to the attention of our diplomatic agent at Madrid. He stated the conviction that these efforts had more than once been made; and then bringing to the notice of our charge the great importance of Cuba to the United States, and to their indisposition to see it transferred to any other Power, he directed him to make proper representations to the court of Madrid upon the subject.

Mr. WESTCOTT here asked leave to interrupt Mr. Cass, and went on to make some remarks respecting a letter written by Mr. Calhoun, when Secretary of State, to Mr. King, then the Ameri-



can minister in Paris, which contained some allusion to slavery. Mr. W. also took the opportunity to express the opinion that England meditates the acquisition of Cuba and Yucatan, and among other reasons, in order to assail the domestic institutions of the South.

Mr. CALHOUN defended his letter, and said that he might add, with an honest pride, that it had contributed to produce a change of sentiment in England, which had diminished her attachment to abolition to such an extent that she is now attempting to resuscitate a trade very much like the slave trade, with a view to the restoration of the prosperity of her West India colonies.

Mr. CASS continued. More recently, sir—indeed, during the present session of Congress—a discussion arose in the British House of Commons, confirming all the rumors to which I have alluded, and which may well excite our apprehensions, and call upon us for decisive action. On the 4th of February last Lord George Bentinck, one of the principal statesmen of England, and the leader of the Tory party in the House of Commons, in a discussion on the slave trade, said: "He had read in the Times an extract from a United States paper, in which it was stated that 'if the United States did not possess herself of Cuba, Great Britain would; and that England had a greater claim by one hundred fold to Cuba than the United States had to Mexico, because a sum of £45,000,000 was due to British subjects, and Cuba was hypothecated for the debt, &c.' He would therefore say at once, let them take possession of Cuba, and settle the question altogether; let them distrain upon it for the just debt due—and too long in vain—from the Spanish Government." He added: "They would put an end to the slave trade if they could emancipate the slaves of Cuba." *Credat Judæus Appella.* Let him who will, believe that any motive of philanthropy enters into this system of policy. The cloven foot peeps out below, where the speaker says, "Then depend upon it, when Great Britain possessed the Havana, as once she did in 1762, when she held it for about a year, and then exchanged it for the Floridas, and WHEN SHE COULD PUT THE TRADE OF AMERICA IN TWO, no more boasts would be heard of what the United States could do," &c. These are plain thoughts, sir, and plainly spoken, and spoken by a high man in a high place.

Mr. CALHOUN. The design was disavowed by the British minister.

Mr. CASS. I do not find it so, sir. What the British minister said was anything but a disavowal. Here it is—all he said upon this subject. The speaker is the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the organ of the British cabinet upon subjects of commerce: "Neither did he propose to follow his noble friend through his arguments in support of the proposition that we should force close upon Cuba, and take possession of that dependency as a lien for the benefit of the Spanish bondholders."

Mr. CALHOUN. There is somewhere a more direct disavowal.

Mr. CASS. I cannot find it, sir, and I think the Senator from South Carolina is in error. But it matters little whether it is so or not. Formal disavowals cost but little, and prove nothing.

Mr. CALHOUN. Lord George Bentinck is not

a member of the British Cabinet, nor is he at the head of the Tory party.

Mr. CASS. I know he is not in the Cabinet, sir; but he certainly leads the Tory interest in the House of Commons, and speaks the sentiments of a large portion of the English politicians. My object is to show that the acquisition of Cuba is one of the objects of British policy. And I certainly do show it, when I show that the project is distinctly avowed and recommended by a leading member of the House of Commons, exerting a powerful influence over one of the two great parties into which the country is divided, and who, in the mutation of English politics, may be Prime Minister to-morrow.

I do not know, sir, that any one proposes, under existing circumstances, to send forces to Yucatan with any design of holding permanent possession of the country. The President in his message openly disclaims any such view, and our proceedings here are based upon the same determination. We go there to aid the Yucatecos in this their day of extremity; not only in obedience to the dictates of humanity, but as a great measure of public policy, to prevent that region from falling into other hands. Our duty fulfilled, tranquillity restored, and the Government of the country placed in the exercise of its legitimate functions, we shall have discharged our trust, and can then retire with safety and with honor.

A great deal has been said here, sir, respecting the connection between Yucatan and Mexico, and of the difficulties which this connection places in the way of our action. I am not going to enter into the casuistry of politics upon this subject. It is no place for subtle distinctions—into the "sophisms and abstruse speculations" (to use the language of Mr. Sierra) by which equity and justice are mystified. The political bonds which have heretofore united those two countries, always sat loosely upon both; and he who forms his judgment of their connection by the principles of our own Confederation, will sacrifice truth to a false analogy. Yucatan was a sovereign State. It joined the Mexican confederacy, and became one of its members upon the terms prescribed in the act of union. How often those terms have been violated, and that union virtually dissolved, I do not stop to inquire. One-tenth part of the abuses perpetrated in the name of the Mexican Government, if perpetrated here, would long ago have rent this league asunder, and would have reduced it to its original elements. The State of Yucatan is now overrun by a domestic enemy. Protection is due to her from the Mexican confederation. It is one of the very cases for which she yielded up her sovereignty, and almost the principal one where the aid of the General Government can be needed. But that protection is not granted. Perhaps it cannot be; and perhaps it would not be, if it could. Be this as it may, the result to Yucatan is the same. She bartered her allegiance for protection. They must go together; and this principle is now everywhere acknowledged. The rights of the Mexican confederation are (if I may so speak) artificial, and the confederation itself destructible. But the rights of the States are permanent, and their sovereignties indestructible. Their governments are responsible for the safety and happiness of their people, and they must control the measures which are

necessary to secure them. In this case, the Government of Yucatan is endeavoring to fulfill its duty; and as they have a right to go anywhere for aid, so any one has a right to aid them, unless prevented by paramount considerations. If we were at peace with Mexico, as England and Spain are, we should have the same right which they have to render this assistance. The very extremity of the case creates its own principles. Does the existing war with Mexico limit our rights or control our duties in this respect? Certainly not, while the war is going on; for during that time we can carry on our operations wherever we please, and for what purpose we please, throughout the whole Mexican confederacy. But it has been objected, during the course of this discussion, by the Senator from Delaware, [Mr. CLAYTON,] and the Senator from Kentucky, [Mr. CRITTENDEN,] and the Senator from Maryland, [Mr. JOHNSON,] that the existing war with Mexico interposes insuperable obstacles to our action. I think this opinion is founded in error, which a little reflection will remove. The object of an armistice is to keep two military parties within given positions, and to prohibit any operations or increase of force during its continuance—generally to give time for negotiating a peace. But the very basis of such an arrangement is, that no change take place within the limits of one party, which would render the situation of the other at the close of the armistice, should war be resumed, worse than at the commencement. They merely rest upon their arms till again called into action.

Now, sir, this fundamental principle is violated in the case of Yucatan; and whether, from the want of inclination, or the want of power in the Mexican Government to prevent it, is equally indifferent to us in the exercise of our rights. A war is raging within the Mexican line of the armistice, if Yucatan is a part of Mexico; and if it is not, this question is at an end; and this war may change the entire condition of that country, which to-morrow, by the termination of the armistice, we have a right to occupy. An enemy is advancing there, who is seizing the cities and towns, and may hold the fortifications, and whom, if let alone, we may find it difficult to dislodge. The authority of the power making the armistice is practically disavowed; and a party has come forward, who neither claims its rights nor acknowledges its obligations. Why, sir, if a French army were in Germany, and restrained in its operations by a temporary armistice, does any one suppose it would remain inactive, and suffer some other Power to interpose and take possession of the very State against which it was engaged in hostilities? If the Indians should approach San Luis, as they are now approaching Merida, must we remain inactive in the neighborhood, and see it taken or destroyed, and our means of further prosecuting the war vigorously thus essentially impaired? No, sir, an armistice brings duties as well as rights with it; and among these duties, the most important is to preserve the relative condition of the parties unchanged.

It has been also said, sir, that as a peace with Mexico would interfere with our action in this case, and might complicate our relations with that country, and as peace may speedily come, we ought not, therefore, to interpose under existing circumstances.

I am not at all satisfied, sir, with this view of the case; because—

1. We do not propose to go to Yucatan for the purpose of conquest, but of protection; not to assail the Mexican Government, but to discharge its duties. Our action will be independent of the condition of peace or war, and consistent with the most amicable relations between us and Mexico. Our duties, therefore, will not cease the instant a peace is formed, but must continue till the Yucatec people are placed in safety. As soon as Mexico will put herself between them and their danger, with efficient means for action, we shall retire, and leave the governments to discharge their own duties.

2. We could not retire before, because we should find ourselves in conflict with independent savages—independent for the time being—and should have a right to finish it, or to see that it would be finished, and not precipitately to flee from it, leaving our object unaccomplished.

A good deal has been said here, sir, respecting the condition of the inhabitants of Yucatan, both civilized and savage. Our information upon the subject is not so precise as we could desire; still the great features of the two races, both natural and political, are sufficiently obvious. The white race has been assailed by the colored race, and the war, whatever may be the causes of its origin, has become a war of extermination. All the accounts from our own officers, as well as from other sources, public and private, speak of the assailing party as we should speak, under similar circumstances, of our Indians; and Commander Bigelow calls them "ruthless Indians." I have conversed with two intelligent officers, who are now here—Lieutenant Porter of the navy, and Lieutenant Slack of the marine corps—both of whom have been among these people, and both of whom represent them as inferior to our Indians, as well in intellect as in physical conformation. Certainly the description of them given by the honorable Senator from Connecticut, the result of his inquiries, agrees in its essential points with the characteristics of the red man of our own forest. That honorable Senator, however, spoke of them in connection with the workmen of Paris, whom he called the *braves*, from the frocks which they wear, resembling the hunting-shirts of our western pioneers, and the frocks of the English ploughmen. But the Senator, if he meant to intimate, as I thought he did, that there were any points of resemblance between the French republicans and the Mexican Indians, except those common to the family of man, knew little of the former, and elevated the latter much higher in the scale of humanity than they now are, or, I am afraid, ever will be. I will not take upon myself the defence of the Parisian people. They do not need it; and their noble conduct during the recent convulsions in France is sufficient to redeem them from any aspersion.

[The extracts which follow were not read in the Senate, but they are inserted here in order that the true condition of things in Yucatan may be understood. They are taken from documents then just laid upon the table, but which have since been printed.]

I understand there is but one exception in the correspondence of our officers with the Government, from the general opinion of the low condition of

of "Lieutenant Hernden, a highly respectable young officer, who dates his report on the 16th March, 1848, after a very brief service on the station. He derived his information at Sisal, where Barbachano is more popular than Mendez. In transmitting his report, Commodore Perry, in his letter of the 15th March, does not express any concurrence in Lieutenant Hernden's speculations." Lieutenant Hernden was led to suppose that the Indians were induced to rise in consequence of some difficulties growing out of the removal of Barbachano from the government of Yucatan, and the substitution of Mendez in his place; that promises were made to them by the partisans of the latter, which were finally violated; and that some outrages were committed upon them, and some of them killed in the collection of a tax. All this, if so, would seem utterly insufficient to account for this great outbreak, and for the shocking cruelties which attend it. But there is reason to doubt the correctness of Lieutenant Hernden's information on this subject, as it is not corroborated by other accounts, and as he is obviously in error in some important particulars. He supposes "that the whole matter is a party quarrel," in which, however, he thinks those who originated it may be utterly overwhelmed by the elements they have put in agitation. He obviously underrates the danger of the country, and says "that the people of Merida, Sisal, and its neighborhood, entertain 'much less fear of the Indians and their hostilities than those of Campeachy,' &c.

He says also, "that a gentleman of intelligence, whom he encountered at Sisal, spoke with great confidence of the ability of the whites to resist the Indians, and seemed very confident and much at his ease."

"In further confirmation of my opinion," he adds, "that this is not a war of class, another gentleman of the country, of good standing, Don Simeon Peon, who is the owner of several haciendas in the interior, stated that the Indians in his employment had asked for arms, for the purpose of defending his property." Lieutenant Hernden, it appears, was in Sisal but about a day; a time entirely too short to ascertain the true condition of the country. Subsequent accounts prove that his opinion respecting the progress of the Indians is entirely erroneous. Barbachano has taken the place of Mendez, but this political change has been followed by no favorable change in the war. The correspondence with Commodore Perry comes down to the 15th of April; and between that day and Lieutenant Hernden's speculations, affairs had grown worse and worse.

The consul at Campeachy says, on the 22d of March, "that the Indians are gaining strength every day."

Lieutenant Mason, under the same date, says, "the Indians are gradually and successfully taking the country. They are now about a hundred miles from Merida, in large force. Merida, Sisal, and Campeachy will finally be taken."

Commander Bigelow, on the 25th March, reports that "things are daily getting worse in Yucatan."

Lieutenant Mason on the 7th of April reports: "In my conversation with the ex-Governor Mendez, of Yucatan, he informs me that it is impossible for the whites to resist the Indians, who are

'destroying every town, village, &c., killing men, women, and children. The Indians now muster about sixty thousand, and are divided into four columns.'

The same officer reports on the 18th of March, "My opinion, from information that I can collect, is, that unless Yucatan can get troops, &c., from some foreign Power, she is lost, and that within a few months."

Lieutenant Glasson, in a letter dated April 2, says: "That at Selam, about 120 miles to the eastward of Campeachy, he boarded a small vessel crowded with persons flying to the island of Cosamel, where there was an English settlement, for an asylum." Lieutenant Glasson landed at the town of Selam, and found there a large number of persons from the city of Valladolid, who had fled at the capture of it by the Indians. He conveyed 121 of them in his vessel to Campeachy. He also reports "that the Indians were within seven or eight leagues of Selam, and that they destroy every habitation, and put to death all whom they meet. The accounts of those whom I brought here give a most heart-rending description of the unfortunate condition of the country. Something must be done, either by us or some other Power, or the whole country must fall into the hands of the Indians." Commodore Perry, on the 13th of March, in urging the necessity of assistance, says that the whites have lost all hope of checking the advance of the Indians; and that the statements set forth in the papers transmitted by him are not in the least exaggerated; and that unless assistance is received, the whole country will be laid waste, and the numerous towns and villages of the interior destroyed. The Commodore also says, in a letter of the 15th of April, that "the Indians were still gaining ground; and the whites, without attempting the least defence, continued to fly towards the coast." And the very latest news from Yucatan, given us through the means of the public journals, fully confirms all these statements and anticipations. "At the last account, (says the most recent arrival,) the Indians were within one day's march of Campeachy, in vast numbers, and with no abatement of their design of a general massacre of their opponents. Their war-cry was 'Death to both black and white—man, woman, and child—all save the red man.' They claim to be 250,000 strong, and say the country rightfully belongs to them, and they will possess it, and insure possession by the massacre of all their opponents."

These descriptions, sir, are terribly graphic; and they make known to us as well the awful condition of the country as the characteristic features of the race which is producing it. It is very probable, sir, that these Indians may have been oppressed. Such, indeed, is, perhaps, the inevitable consequence of the effect of power exercised by a civilized caste over a savage one. We read this truth in our own history, and we feel it in our own days. We are not guiltless with respect to the Indians, who have fled for generations, and are still fleeing, before our advancing settlements, and to whom there seems no rest but the grave. And the reproach made by the honorable Senator from Ken-

\* This fact is new here; an actual permanent British establishment on the coast of Yucatan, near the point, and capable of commanding the outlets of the Gulf.

the Yucatese Indians. That exception is the case tucky against the Spanish race in Yucatan, that they have not improved the condition of the Indians, is as applicable to us as to them. Our attempts at civilization have been almost utter failures. Whether these failures have originated in the inherent difficulties of the subject or in injudicious efforts, it would be difficult to decide with certainty. There are great obstacles to improvement in the fixed habits of the Indians. They change almost as little as the nomadic Arabs, who are essentially now what they were in the days of Abraham. There are but two occupations becoming an adult male Indian, and these are fighting and hunting. He may go to war to acquire glory, and he may go to the chase to procure meat and furs. But he must not work; if he does, he is dishonored; and all the labor is thus thrown upon the women, whose condition is equally harsh and servile. This was originally a fundamental provision of Indian society, and it was too agreeable to the stronger party to be easily surrendered. It has certainly given very much to circumstances, but it still exerts a powerful influence upon the aboriginal race. But, whatever may have been the condition of the Yucatese Indians, whether attached to the haciendas as peons, or roaming through the forest, there can be no justification for their present conduct.

It is said, indeed, that they have a right to vote; and having been admitted to the enjoyment of political privileges, the war they are waging is a civil war looking to a change of government by a revolution. The constitution of Yucatan may have said they are fit to vote, while their own moral constitution may say they are not fit for it. A false philanthropy may have given them the political qualifications of citizens, while wholly destitute of the necessary intellectual qualifications. Their present conduct shows that they are utterly unprepared to exercise political power—as much so as our Indians, whose conduct they closely imitate in this war of extermination. The Yucatese Government, in this extension of the right of suffrage, have made an unhappy experiment, as they now find to their cost. Such high privileges are not to be tampered with. Here, thanks to our condition, the very broadest exercise of political rights is extended to all, for all may safely exercise them. Long habit and education have qualified our citizens to participate in all the powers of government, and this constitution is a very cornerstone of our whole political fabric. This war in Yucatan is a war of races, not of parties—for physical existence, at least on one side, not for political power. The advancing savages, it appears, have elected a chief, as their ancestors probably did in remote times, and as many of our tribes do at the present day. Their cruelty stamps them with the true character of savages, and this consideration is enough to demand our interposition, without adverting to any other. Certainly, we are accustomed to associate a good deal of cruelty with civil wars, and especially with Spanish civil wars. But these contests do not sweep before them entire races, and utterly destroy whole countries; and, when fought for political rights, they cease immediately or gradually, with the attainment of their objects. But no such spectacle as this has been seen in the world since the catastrophe on St. Do-

mingo, which seems to have been the exact prototype of the events now going on in Yucatan. The white race is totally subdued, broken in spirit, and fleeing before their pursuers; still no mercy is shown, and the object is obviously extermination, and not political power.

In this state of things, we are urged to stop; to get information, as though we did not know all we could know, so far as the claims of humanity are concerned, and to examine and discuss all the casuistry of politics before we place ourselves between the barbarians and their victims. We might as well stop to investigate the cause of a destructive fire before we consented to aid in putting it out. And while we talk, other Powers may discharge the claims of humanity, and take possession of the country they protect.

We must recollect that it is the actual recognized Government of Yucatan which calls on the world for assistance, not to guard its power, but to secure the existence of its people. Let us discharge the conjoined duties of humanity and policy, and leave the internal questions between the two races to be adjusted after the one is saved from the vengeance of the other.

The honorable chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations alluded to the reports which have reached us, that the Yucatese Indians have been furnished by the British agents at Belize with the arms which have enabled them to carry on this merciless warfare. The fact is distinctly intimated by Mr. Sierra, the commissioner of Yucatan; and, I understand, reported, if not credited, by some of our officers. It has been called in question here, and principally, I believe, from its very atrocity. The honorable chairman stated that the guns had the English Tower mark, and had, therefore, been manufactured for the Government; and he drew the conclusion—logically enough, I thought—that this circumstance furnished presumptive evidence of their distribution by British authorized agents. The honorable Senator from Mississippi, however, [Mr. DAVIS,] supposed that these guns might have been sold by the British Government at home, in consequence of their having been made before some of the recent improvements in fire-arms, and that they had thus found their way to the traders, and from them, in the usual course of traffic, to the Indians. This may be so, sir; for a similar disposition is sometimes made of arms become antiquated. But I am not aware that this has recently taken place; and I had supposed the old stock on hand had long since been exhausted. I am not well enough acquainted with the habits of these Indians, to tell you what kind of arms they use; but they must be very different in their habits from our Indians, if they prefer English muskets for hunting. And if they do not, I do not understand how these muskets could become articles of traffic at Belize, or why the traders should be furnished with supplies of them. I have, however, sir, seen such things in my time; and as they have occurred elsewhere, they may have occurred in Yucatan. I am not about to prefer a bill of indictment against England, as the honorable Senator from Connecticut thinks some of us are too prone to do. But I am not disposed to reject the lessons of history, because the truths it teaches may be harsh and unacceptable. I know that arms have been furnished to Indians within the United States by the agents

of the British Government, and by the directions of that Government; and I may thence draw the legitimate conclusion, that such an act is within its code of political ethics, and may be done when called for by political considerations. The measures to which I refer, took place when the distinguished Senator from South Carolina [Mr. CALHOUN] presided over the Department of War, and connected his name so permanently and so brilliantly with the history of its administration. He came to it, sir, when it was languid, exhausted by the exertions of a terrible war, and when it was comparatively without order or energy; and he left it in a high state of organization, prompt in its administration, economical in its expenditures, and with a pervading spirit controlling all its branches. I can wish his successors no more fortunate termination of their labors, than that they should retire from them with a reputation equal to his. Reports of the distribution of arms by the British authorities to the Indians in the United States were repeatedly made to him, and the matter became the subject of formal diplomatic representations to the British Government. I think the Senator from South Carolina must have a general recollection of the affair. (Here Mr. CALHOUN gave a sign of assent.)

For many years the various Indian tribes, as far as the Mississippi, and some of them west of that river, were annually invited to Fort Malden, at the mouth of the Detroit river, where large supplies of arms, of ammunition, and clothing, and of other articles of taste or comfort, agreeably to their habits, were distributed to them. I speak of years of peace. If I went back to years of war, I could tell another tale—a tale of human flesh—of American flesh—sold in the market like butchers' meat in the shambles. But I forbear. When, however, peace returned, and found large bodies of warlike savages filling that portion of our country, it found also that their attachments to England were kept alive by the subsidies given to them. Our whole frontier was held in a state of greater or less alarm, and all the outbreaks which took place among them could be traced to the ascendancy acquired over them by this system, and to the purposes to which it was directed. They came to the great English storehouse as regularly as the ox that knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib; and they were fed from that crib, and many a deed of destruction was the consequence. After some years, however, and owing probably to the remonstrances of our Government, the depot was changed, and was established at Drummond's Island, in Lake Huron, then almost without the sphere of our observation. When, however, the Indians receded, and Drummond's Island passed under our jurisdiction, another change was made; and perhaps more changes since that time, for, owing to other occupations, I have lost sight of the subject for some years. I suppose, however, that much is not done now, as from the increase of our power, and the annihilation of the power of the Indians upon that frontier, England could hardly count upon their services during war, and would therefore feel little disposition to subsidize them during peace. So much for philanthropy.

I prefer, sir, the bill reported by the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs to the amendments proposed. I do so because, among

other reasons, I like to call things by their true names. The bill expresses clearly the objects we have in view, and the motives which influence us. And our operations under it may be continued till the conflict is terminated, or till the Mexican Government can interpose with sufficient vigor for the protection of the Yucatec people. And a peace with Mexico would not thus compel us to retire before the Indians at the very moment the exigency might be the most urgent.

Some objection has been made to the provision for the *armed occupation of the country*. I do not object, sir, either to the expression or to the power. If we go to Yucatan at all, we must go there not as subordinate allies, but with a right to control and direct all the operations we may deem necessary. Assuredly we could not think of placing our officers under the authority of the Yucatec Government, timid and incompetent as that Government has shown itself. And it ought to be distinctly understood, that wherever our forces move in Yucatan, during this period of convulsion, they move with a right to take any positions they may deem expedient, and to carry on all the operations which circumstances may require. I have not had an opportunity carefully to examine the amendments, having only heard them read, but they seem to indicate our proper course of action less satisfactory than the original bill itself.

Mr. President, great interests are committed to our keeping. We are not, we cannot be isolated. The eldest of the independent States upon this continent—and, I may say, without the charge of national partiality, the most advanced in civilization and improvement—our course and our example must exert a decisive influence for evil or for good, upon its future destiny. The honorable Senator from Connecticut alluded to an incident gratifying in itself, and illustrative of the progress of sound political opinions. He referred to a journal of Merida, the capital of Yucatan, which contained an article speculating upon the probability of our consenting to the annexation of that country, and warmly advocating the measure. This is a tribute rarely paid to the institutions of other nations, and as little as any other to the Government of England. Something has been said, and harshly said, of an emergency in this case, and something more of a crisis—of war, and of its cost and consequences. Well, sir, there are cases of emergency, both in the lives of communities and of individuals, which demand speedy and decisive action, and this is one of them—cases when promptness is wisdom, and when timid counsels are sure to bring dishonor, if not disaster. As to a crisis, the word has become so familiar to my ears, and the idea to my mind, that both have long since lost all their terrors. I have been upon the stage of action almost half a century, and during the fifty years which composed it we have had a crisis at least fifty times; some graver and some lighter, but each grave enough, in the opinion of the prophets of political evil, to destroy our Constitution, and with it the last hopes of liberty. But we have gone on increasing in numbers and improvement, and in all the elements of power and prosperity, with an accelerated pace before unknown in the history of the world. And at no period of our progress had we more reason to humble ourselves in thankfulness to Providence than at this very moment, when

many of the powerful governments of the world are falling around us; when society seems elsewhere almost in a state of dissolution; while our institutions are not only unassailed, but, to all human appearance, beyond the reach of assault; while our Government is growing stronger in the affections of the people, as time and experience multiply the proofs that it is best adapted to our condition, and that it brings with it as great a measure of political happiness as is probably compatible with human society. I concur fully in the opinion so well expressed by the Senator from Connecticut, and first advanced by Mr. Jefferson, that it is the strongest Government upon the face of the earth; the strongest for the purposes of good, and the weakest for the purposes of evil, because controlled by an intelligent people who watch and restrain it. This characteristic I have heard well illustrated by the honorable Senator from Ohio, [Mr. ALLEN,] in a manner peculiarly his own. Our Government, like the pyramid which stands upon its base, has a broad foundation, which cannot be shaken; while many another Government in the world stands upon its apex, and is liable to be overthrown by the slightest shock assailing it. Our Constitution is almost the only one where a revolution is impossible; because, if I may so say, it has nothing to revolve to. Fundamental alterations belong here to the ordinary power of the people, and may be made by

their will as readily as the slightest changes in our policy or legislation. I have yet to see the first man in this broad land who professes a desire to exchange this Government for another; and in the whole range of human experience, where can as much be elsewhere said with truth?

The state of the Old World, while it is in singular contrast with our own, excites the liveliest sensibility here. Its "throes and convulsions," to use the forcible expression of Mr. Jefferson, are portentous of radical changes. The arrival of every steam-packet is watched with anxiety, and its earliest news is sent instantaneously by the telegraph, almost to the verge of our Republic. And after all the gloomy vaticinations of the English Government, and country, and press, respecting the duration of our institutions, and the opinion, so often expressed, and I may say the hopes so long entertained by many, that they would soon pass away, and give place to a monarchical government, we exhibit to the world the unexampled, and I may say the sublime, spectacle of a people, looking across the ocean to Europe, watching the progress of the striking and stirring events which threaten to overturn all its established powers, and which may terminate in new combinations of society; while their own social and political systems were never more prosperous in themselves, nor ever dearer to the great people who protect them, and in turn are protected by them.

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